

ourvalley.org

(USPS-378-080) *"The*

"The Voice of Craig County"

Wednesday, December 16, 2020 \$1.00

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Santa comes early for Paint Bank Fire and Rescue



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Paint Bank Fire Department was happy that Santa came early this year as they were able to purchase their "gently used" fire truck from Selma Fire Department. Pictured on the left are members of Selma; on the right are Paint Bank volunteers, all Hales, Tinker, Rick and Robert.

Pam Dudding Contributing writer

When the "hohoho" comes early, people get jolly! The Paint Bank Fire and Rescue teams recently got a couple of early presents and they are still rejoicing.

They recently posted on Facebook,

"You may see someone new hanging around the firehouse. We would like to introduce new Pumper 20. Today, we purchased this truck from Selma Volunteer Fire company in Allegany County. This truck is about as gently used as fire trucks get. This truck has a bigger pump and tank, as well as a lot more storage for organization than our

current truck. It will be a huge upgrade to serve our community for the years to come."

Their older truck was rusting out and replacement parts were hard to find. They added, "It was not dependable and because of that, we felt it could not serve our community in time of need."

The 1990 FMC Fire truck was acquired from Selma Fire Department who gave them a good deal on it and the team already has it in service. The funds were used from their many years of saving and fundraisers, which they shared they are so appreciative of the community for its support.

The advantages of the newer truck are: a custom cab where multiple firefighters can ride, decreasing personal vehicles on scene, air pack seats that help them be able to jump out ready to do the job, 1,000 gallons of water compared to 600 on the other truck and more storage capabilities for equipment.

The reasons for needing a new rescue were plentiful. They were having

See Paint Bank, page 2

McCleary kids making Christmas for Veterans a bit more special



The students created homemade cards, writing many thanks to Veterans.

To make it even more special, they put their handmade card inside of a Christmas card.

Wrote one child, "If y'all hadn't been there during the revolutionary war, we wouldn't be here today."

Other students sent their appreciation with many thanks regarding the service of vets, noting that they are happy "they made it through the many wars." "At first, I wasn't going to do the cards because everything is so crazy with COVID-19, but I couldn't let a year go by without letting our Veterans know how much we appreciate them," Jones said. "They gave so much for us, it's the least we can do to recognize them once a year."



BMITTED PHOTO

Santa and Mrs. Claus are so excited to see the kids in Craig on Saturday, December 19. He will visit the Fairgrounds at 5 p.m. and be there until 7 p.m. There will be candy and a small toy for every child too, plus maybe a couple of surprises.

Santa Claus is coming to the Fairgrounds

Pam Dudding Contributing writer

To kids, only from Santa Claus himself!

COVID-19 or no COVID-19, Santa Claus sent a message, "I cannot allow my girls and boys to not get a visit from me this year. So, I am making a special stop and will be in Craig County at the Fairgrounds on Saturday, December 19, just for you."

He had to rearrange is schedule, but was able to do it, just for the kids. It seems that there are quite a few elves in Craig County that have volunteered to help him make the evening a little more special too, including music by David's Live Sounds. The event will be held at the Fairgrounds, starting at sunset, and lasting until about 7 p.m. Everyone is asked to abide by the COVID-19 restrictions, as that is the only way Santa can visit. He said he may bring a couple of friends also and there will be special things to look at as people drive through. And kids, there will candy and a toy for everyone. Parents are asked to keep their kids inside the vehicles until they stop in front of Santa.

can be taken. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, Santa cannot have kids on his lap or stand beside him this year. They can, however, stand below in front of him.

But Santa said he will listen to every request and get it to his elves for his special Christmas Eve night delivery.

Also, Mike's Dog House is going to be there if people wish to order dinner while waiting in line Please honor the CO-VID-19 restrictions that are put upon this event with masks and social distancing, so everyone can enjoy the evening. If, while driving in line, in your vehicle, you wish to take a picture of others lighted vehicles or other things set up, you may. (We do ask that no one pass other vehicles while in line.) Please be attentive to kids as their excitement bubbles over in seeing Santa. For any questions, please contact Pam Dudding via Facebook. Santa is hoping to provide a time in Craig for kids to have an evening of seeing him, getting surprises and the family to enjoy. It is a joyous time of year, celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ and giving to others, bringing happiness and big grins, and this special event is to add to this season that has been changed by the coronavirus pandemic. Merry Christmas and Santa hopes to see many people there! HO-HOHO!

SUBMITTED PHOTO

McCleary Elementary pupils, Keaton, Gunner and Zoie were three of the students who made special handmade cards for local Veterans and tucked them inside colorful Christmas cards.

Pam Dudding

Contributing writer

As Christmas time enters the atmosphere of people's homes, it also enters the hearts of many during this special season.

McCleary Elementary teacher Karen Jones assisted her third and fifth-grade students in making cards for Veterans throughout Craig County. At first, Jones was just going to make enough to hand out at the VFW.

"Then I realized it probably wouldn't take many more to send to every Veteran in the county," said Jones who obtained a list

See Veterans, page 2

Craig County High School Yearbook needs more pictures

Pam Dudding Contributing writer

Everyone knows the value of a great picture. It can bring repetitive fond memories and even great laughs.

Teenagers seem to find this a challenge when taking pictures and excel in their creativity in doing so.

Because of all the changes, this

school year has caused because of COVID-19 and many students schooling by internet, Sierra Frazier is requesting participation from the community in obtaining "cool" pictures for the 2020 – 2021 Yearbook for students in grades six through 12. Frazier is the Craig County High School Art Teacher. She is also the middle and high school yearbook adviser. "To our Craig County Middle and High School Community, the yearbook staff needs your help," she shared. "This year's yearbook will be one for the history books. In 20, 30, 40 plus years, this will be the yearbook our students will want to pick up and show their children."

The yearbook staff invites stu-

Santa and Mrs. Claus will be on stage.

When people's turn arrives in front of Santa, they have the option to get out of their vehicle, and kids can stand in front of the stage, and express their "wish list" to Santa and receive a toy. At that time, pictures



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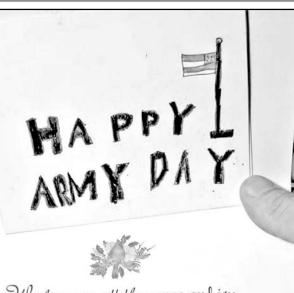
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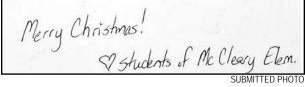
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See Yearbook, page 2

Veterans from page 1



Wishing you all the peace and joy of this beautiful Christmas season



John Hall, a Craig County Veteran, received one of the cards and posted about it on Facebook. "Thank you to the students of McCleary Elementary School for such a warm and kind card. To the student that took the time out of their day to draw this for me means a lot. To the teachers and staff that work so hard at the school, I thank you," he said. "This is why I love our community so much. It's the little things that make it amazing to be here, back at home. God bless and Merry Christmas."

of many of the Craig County Veterans.

Ken Looney, a Navy Veteran of the local #4491 Craig Valley VFW Post, took some to hand out at their monthly meeting. "It then evolved into

the idea of sending our thank-you cards inside of a Christmas card," Jones said. "Our kids are so grateful to the Veterans and very excited to express thanks to them in this way."

Yearbook from page 1

dents and parents to submit photos for the yearbook.

If people have great photos of school and community events or their friends just having fun, they are encouraged to share them for the yearbook.

Frazier added that although it will be a unique challenge to capture, "the story of the year and the cool pics of the students in our school, we are excited to get started."

Hopes are to also get a few "stories" to go along with photos, to complete the photos submitted.

"Our photographers can't be everywhere. Help us get as many photos as possible to create a terrific book everyone will want to have," Frazier noted. "That's where you come in. Parents, students and members of our community can all be a part of the yearbook this year."

proud parents to celebrate your student's journey with a yearbook ad," shared Frazier who added they can be made in three easy payments. Ad breakdowns are as follows: full page (\$150.00), half page (\$100,00) and quarter page (\$50.00). Color business ads are as follows: full page (\$100.00), half page (\$75.00), quarter page (\$50.00) and the oneeighth page (\$25.00).

She added, "Showcase your business in the book that never loses its appeal. Students and their families will flip through the pages of the yearbook hundreds of times and cherish it for a lifetime. We appreciate your support."

Proceeds from ad sales are a fundraiser for the yearbook program.

Paint Bank from page 1

problems getting replacement parts for the vehicle and had electrical issues with the unit.

The team added, "The state EMS inspection requirements have changed requiring us to need new and updated equipment and vehicle."

The new 2020 Ford Osage ambulance was acquired with an 80/20 EMS grant. They also received funds from Craig County with help from the Board of Supervisors, and their own funds.

"Jim Cady helped us on this grant and asking for funds from the county and was instrumental in helping us get this ambulance by insisting we put in for the grant," said various team members who added they applied in 2019, but were told it probably would not go through.

They joyfully added, "But we got a surprise and the grant on January 2, 2020."

They shared that the new addition has made a great difference in what they can offer for their community.

"The new ambulance will be dependable and not down for weeks while we search for parts during a breakdown and it will pass inspections by the state EMS office as it now meets their requirements," they explained. "It will be a smoother ride for our patients and the EMT's working. It will also be good for our members with the electric cot and lift saving our backs from lifting patients into the ambulance.'

Members are also excited as it is also a four-wheel drive which is much needed in their mountainous areas in winter months.

The new vehicles will add a stability to their services which was much needed in their community for their neighbors in times of need. Just a few of the options it has are: Osage UltraCool Upgraded AC System, Stryker Emergency

Care 6506 Power Pro XT Cot w/ XPS Package & Stryker 6309 MTS PowerLOAD System, CLASS Liquid Spring Suspension System, Drop Skirting On Module Side, Whelen Warning Lights, TAL85 Traffic Advisor and Siren, Adjustable Cabinet Dividers In The Airway Cabinet, Cargo Safety Net and Six Point Harnesses, Anti-Microbial Coated Stainless Steel Grab Handles and a Severe Climate Premium Insulation and Sound Deadening Package.

"We all are there for our community when needed," said rescue members. "With the closest departments being either New Castle or Boiling Springs and mountains around us, time is essential during an emergency."

Currently, their vehicles include: 2020 Ford F450 Osage ambulance replaced a 1994 Chevy ambulance, 1993 Ford F350 Taylor Made ambulance, 1990 FMC pumper replaced a 1976 GMC pumper and a 2007 Pierce Tanker.

The PBV Fire and Rescue currently have a great team of four EMTs, three drivers for rescue and ten firefighters including: President Roger Clarkson, Vice President Dwight Bradley, Secretary Erin Hale, Treasurer Ron Kreisa, Chaplain Robert Hale, Fire Chief Richard (Tinker) Hale Jr., Squad Captain Tammy Hale, Assistant Chief Rick Hale, Quartermaster Stephen Linton, Assistant Quartermaster Gale Meadows, Shorty Bostic, Rick Huffman, Don Martin, Darryl Blankenship and Steve Weikle.

The youngest members are 33 and 39 with all others over 55 years of age.

"Many of us have been with the department for over 30 years," they shared. 'We have not had many new members of the last decade."

Currently, they have a great line of vehicles.



The Paint Bank Fire and Rescue were blown away after receiving the grant to help with the purchase of a new 2020 Rescue Squad.



The many amenities of the new rescue squad will be extremely beneficial to both volunteers and the citizens they have to transport.

They noted with a sigh of relief, "The ambulance has all that is required, the firetruck is ready to go also. Nothing else is needed for either vehicle at this time."

However, as anyone with vehicles knows, there will always be a need for wear and tear issues such as brakes, tires, hoses and batteries for different equipment.

Therefore, if anyone would like to take this giving season, especially for a tax write-off, they can donate by giving to a member or mail to: Paint Bank Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad, c/o Ron Kreisa-Treasurer, 585 Hidden Meadow Lane, Paint Bank, VA 24131.

The members wished to share, "As with all volunteer organizations, people and staffing are of our utmost importance. We always have a job for someone, not just with fire or rescue. We have the business end to do also, ones and friends. However, with many of us doing two they are now more ready or three different jobs within than ever to serve at the ring the department. We are not of a bell.

just firefighters and EMTs. We all have business offices and board of director members positions also, as there are not enough members to distribute differently."

The Paint Bank Volunteer Fire and Rescue wished to extend their grateful appreciation. "We thank our community and beyond for all the donations and help with fundraisers," they added. "Also, Jim Cady, Emergency Coordinator for Craig County, for pushing us to apply for the EMS grant and assistance during the process and our Ladies Auxiliary who pays our insurance on building and vehicles every year, we so thank you."

Now their heartfelt wish is that they do not have to use the equipment, hoping that all have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year with their loved

Checkoff beefing up TV presence this holiday season

Viewers tuning into the Hallmark Channel this holiday season can feast their eyes on a delicious sight. For the first time since 2003, Beef Checkoff-funded "Beef. It's What's For Dinner." advertisements are appearing on television. The commercials are airing during the channel's holiday programming. Based on the "Beef. It's What's For Dinner." campaign's successful 2019 "Drool Log" video

roasting over an open fire, the 15-second clips whet viewers' appetites for beef as a holiday meal.

of a prime rib slowly

consumers during the and member of the Virholiday season. Beef is a ginia Farm Bureau Feddelicious comfort food eration Livestock Advisory that reminds folks of Committee. "I think farmhappy times with family and friends." According to the National Cattlemen's Beef sought-after product.' Association, a contractor of the Beef Checkoff, the of the Virginia Cattleads will air over 50 times before the end of the year. NCBA, added that while

portunity to speak to ation beef cattle producer ers pride themselves on the fact that we produce a very high-quality, highly Smith, also a member men's Association and 'I think there will be a commercials are returnlot of enthusiasm for our ing to TV for the first time in years, marketers have found other ways to promote beef to consumers. Checkoff dollars have been used to sponsor popular cooking shows, drive e-commerce marketing, target nutrition programs and educate consumers about the benefits of beef. 'It's really cool that we're finding ways to reach people," Smith said. "Any efforts that increase demand for our product will help Virginia cattle producers' bottom lines." She noted that Google searches for beef recipes spiked during the pandemic, and 62 percent of consumers say they have tried new recipes. In addition to com-"Beef. mercials, the It's What's For Dinner." campaign includes an updated website that provides a one-stop shop for holiday cooking, recipes and shopping. "We hope Virginians will gather around a holiday table with beef as the centerpiece this year," Weiss said. "Virginia cattle producers work hard to provide an excellent product, and consumers can have confidence their beef is produced safely, sustainably and with high animal welfare standards."

People may upload photos by sending an email to sfrazier@craig.k12.va.us.

The website to make senior ads and business ads jostensadservice.com. is Business ads are as low as \$25.00.

"We are calling all

Any questions can be directed to Frazier's office at 540-864-5185 or 540-580-9597.

"Choose to make this 2020-2021 school year special for our teenagers of Craig County," Frazier added. "We are looking for pictures of pretty much anything however, farming pictures would be great."

"The Virginia Beef Council is excited to see "Beef. It's What's For Dinner." aired on television again," said Stephanie Weiss, the council's executive director. "With the COVID-19 pandemic keeping more people at home, the Hallmark Channel provides an excellent op-

producers," said Margaret Ann Smith, a sixth-gener-

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- Medicaid
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Veteran's Pension and Survivor's Pension Benefits

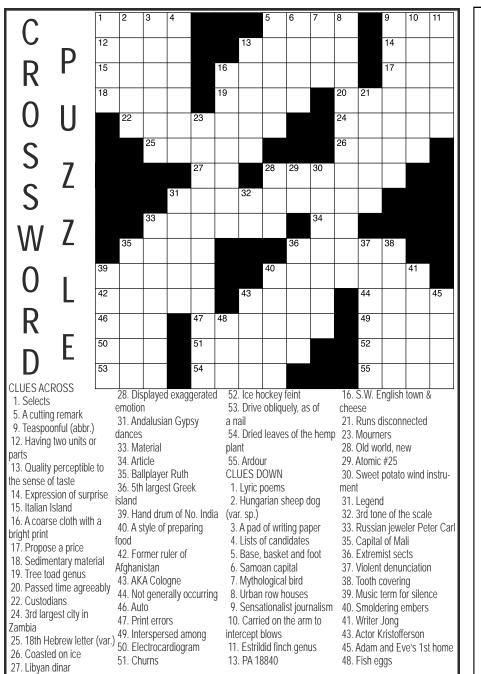
To apply for Lifeline, you must apply to the Lifeline National Verifier at www.checklifeline.org, You may also print an application from that website. If you have questions about applying, to check eligibility or to request an application, visit www.checkline.org or call the National Verifier at 1-800-234-9473

Lifeline is a government assistance program. It is non-transferable. Only eligible consumers may enroll in the program. There is a limit of one discount per household. If you have others questions, or would like TDS to mail you an application, please contact TDS at 1-888-CALL-TDS or visit https://tdstelecom.com/lifeline.html



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-Submitted by Margaret Ann Smith



OMMUNITY CALENDAR

MONDAY THROUGH **SATURDAY**

The Craig County Public Library is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Wednesday from 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. The library is located at 303 Main St. in New Castle. For more information, call (540) 864-8978 or visit www.craiglibrary.org.

EVERY TUESDAY

•Overeaters Anonymous (OA) meeting. 7 p.m. at Christ Lutheran Church, located at 2011 Brandon Avenue in Roanoke. Contact 540-293-4065 for more information.

•New Castle Church of Christ will hold its Bible Study from 7 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. at 118 Main Street in New Castle.

EVERY SATURDAY

Overeaters Anonymous (OA) meeting. 11 a.m. at Christ Lutheran Church, located at 2011 Brandon Avenue in Roanoke. Contact 540-293-4065 for more information.

EVERY SUNDAY

•Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. 8 p.m. at New Castle Fire Hall.

•The New Castle Christian Church, located at 282 Salem Ave, is pastored by Sheldon Cosma is having services at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., with

communion at each, and is on Facebook live at 9 a.m.

•St. Johns Catholic Church, on Route 615, is having virtual masses at 8:30 a.m. and 10 a.m. by Father Steve McNalley. They are also live on Facebook. For more information, contact (540) 864-8686 or send an email to stjohnnewcastle@ tds.net.

SECOND MONDAY

•Paint Bank Ladies Auxiliary meeting, 7 p.m. at the Paint Bank Fire Department. Call 897-5346 for more information.

•Craig County Public Library Board of Trustees meeting at 6 p.m. at the library.

THIRD MONDAY

Town of New Castle Council Meeting at 7 p.m. inside the New Castle Town Hall, located at 339 Market Street.

FIRST TUESDAY

SECOND TUESDAY

AF&AM, 7:30 p.m. at

THIRD WEDNESDAY

Roanoke Farm Service

Agency County Committee

The Botetourt/Craig/

Lodge Hall, 255 Main St.

Mountain Lodge 140

Center.

Craig County School Board meets at 6:30 p.m. in the High School Media

one day before the meeting date regarding possible cancellation information 540-977-2698, Ext. 2. The Bonsack USDA Service Center is located at 36 Executive Circle, Suite 1, Roanoke, VA 24012. All County Committee meetings are open to the public.

meets each month at 10

a.m. at the Bonsack USDA Service Center. Please call

FIRST THURSDAY

Craig County Board of Supervisors meets at 6 p.m. at the Craig County Courthouse.

SECOND THURSDAY

Maywood Garden Club meeting at 7:30 p.m. held at Simmonsville Fire Department.

EVERY TUESDAY AND THURSDAY

Everyone six months and up should receive a flu shot each year. A parent or guardian must accompany those under the age 18. Insurances will be billed. People are encouraged to bring their insurance card and not attend if they have COVID-19 like symptoms. The curbside clinic schedule is from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. by appointment only. For more information, contact 540-864-5136.

THURSDAY, **DECEMBER 17**

The Craig County Department of Social Services Board Meeting will start at 6:30 pm.

Maywood Garden Club continues its mission of making a difference



Master Gardener Erica Jones and Marge Lewter planting bulbs at the triangle.

Gardens keep growing through pandemics, too much rain, insect infestations and the like.

The Maywood Triangle (garden) has been a project of the Maywood Garden Club for some 50 years. It is located on a tiny piece of land where

Northside Road and Route 42 (Cumberland Gap Road) intersect.

The club raises money, mostly by an annual auction (but not this year) to keep the grass mowed and pay for planting supplies. Depending on the physical flexibility of club members, garden and plant maintenance is provided by club members, local Master Gardeners and occasional, family members.

The garden layout is designed more for passerby individuals than for an in-person tour. For



Hazel Beeler and Michael Kuric repairing the Maywood Garden Club bench.

the last number of years, we have tried to provide a bench and a place to contemplate Sinking Creek, the local beef cattle and the resident songbirds.

The bench sits under a pergola built by a family member of the club. The pergola has autumn type

clematis on one side, and a native (purple) wisteria on the other. These provide some filtered shade and a wind break. And twice in the past five years the (wood) bench has suffered apparent vandalism.

The first bench was

totally destroyed and was replaced by Leopold-style bench which recently got vandalized. We had a member and spouse put it back together this fall.

Some of the members this fall planted some spring flowering bulbs. Spring bulbs form roots through fall and winter so they can send up flowers in the spring. I've discovered that Darwin type tulips will actually last a couple of years in the ground if they are planted deep enough – that is, about 12" deep.

I'm also trying for new this year two different types of alium. Alium are generally pretty drought resistant, spread a little bit, and bloom faithfully every year. If you call them onions, people can get turned off. Bulbs need some moisture in the soil to form roots so be sure to water them if you soil is dry.

> -Submitted by Erica Jones

Governors push regional gas tax as states battle COVID-19 nandemic

www.newcastlerecord.com

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Small businesses and consumers likely to suffer under increased gasoline taxes and energy costs -

While the governors of eleven Northeast and mid-Atlantic states try to contain the shattering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, they are actively considering plans for the largest gasoline tax in history. At the urging of a little-known regional compact, the Transportation Climate Initiative administered by the Georgetown Climate Center, the states are considering the first regional gasoline tax in history.

The compact between the states would restrict the sale of gasoline, establish an ever-increasing tax scheme, and develop new government spending programs for projects such as bike lanes and electric vehicles. Participating states include Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia.

The initial TCI proposal outlined \$4 billion in new tax revenue, equating to an approximately 17 cent per gallon increase at the gasoline pump in the first year. More recent program designs show the program would raise gasoline prices in 2022 by 19.6 cents per gallon and rise steadily to 32 cents per gallon by 2032. This is an average price increase of almost 26 cents per gallon over the ten-year period, raising over \$73 billion in revenue from eleven states. Significantly, the Georgetown Climate Center acknowledges that the program will likely only yield an additional six percent in emission reductions. That's right, \$73 billion for six percent more in emission reduction.

A new multi-state bu-

reaucracy would administer the program and determine how to spend the proceeds. Depending on the state, this would be done with limited or no legislative oversight, meaning any future TCI tax increase is a fait accompli. Decisions on this proposal will be made in the next several weeks. Although public support is dwindling as consumers realize the increase in their everyday expenses, the Governors are moving forward with the tax, cap and spend program and pushing an agreement by year's end.

Mike O'Halloran, Maryland and Delaware State Director of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), predicts the costs of a new multistate bureaucracy and increases in gasoline taxes will be devastating. He says, "it is very unfortunate to impose a major tax increase that will affect consumers and business while COVID-19 is hammering communities. The region is reeling under record unemployment where 11 million people

remain jobless – double the rate from February, according to a recent article in the Washington Post. People cannot afford to pay more at the pump and small businesses will not be able to sustain the fallout."

Rob Underwood, President of Energy Marketers of America, is concerned the revenue raised by TCI will not be spent on the most critical transportation and emission reduction projects but will instead be siphoned into a variety of other states' needs. Un-derwood says, "Those taxes will go to a multi-government run entity and taken out of the local community. TCI has already promised 35 percent to environmental justice advocates. Before this is all said and done, what other non-affiliated initiatives will be funded by motorists across the region?"

These proposals will come as a surprise to hardworking citizens who are opposed to paying more at the pump for gasoline. The

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public deserves to know the truth about hidden costs underlying the calls to fight climate change.

-Submitted by Rob Underwood, President of the Energy Marketers of America

Job Opportunity in Craig County

The Craig County Electoral Board is seeking qualified applicant for the position of General Registrar/ Director of Elections. Qualified applicants must apply by 12/22/20. Applicants must be a resident and qualified voter in Craig County or willing to re-locate. A complete job description and application information may be found at www.vote@ craigcountyva.gov or by mail to the Craig County Electoral Board, P.O. Box 8, New Castle, Va.

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OP<u>INION</u>

Book Awards

Library Corner

Empowering individuals to build a stronger community

Did vou ever wonder what it means when a book has one of those gold stickers indicating it is an award-winner? Here you will find an explanation for some of the book awards you may see. Perhaps your next book will be a selection trusting that one of these awards makes that book worthy of your attention!

Pulitzer Prize

Joseph Pulitzer, a renowned journalist, established this award in 1917. Since 1984, Pulitzer winners have received their prizes from the president of Columbia University at a luncheon in May in the rotunda of the Low Library in the presence of family members, professional associates, board

members and the faculty of the School of Journalism. This year's winner for Fiction was Colson Whitehead, and this was his second Pulitzer.

Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence

The Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction, established in 2012, recognize the best fiction and nonfiction books for adult readers published in the U.S. in the previous year and serve as a guide to help adults select quality read-ing material. They are the first single-book awards for adult books given by the American Library Association and reflect the expert judgment and insight of library professionals who work closely with adult readers.

The International **Booker Prize**

This prize is awarded to an English-language book and honors not just the book, but the author for outstanding achieve-

ment in writing. The 2020 award went to Marieke Lucas Rijneveld for The Discomfort of Evening. The Booker Prize

Awarded in October each year, the Booker Prize is the UK's top literary prize and the mostsingle-book watched award in the Englishspeaking world. Winner for 2020: Shugie Bain by Douglas Stewart.

John Newberry Medal The Newbery Medal is

awarded in January each year by the American Library Association for the most distinguished American children's book published the previous year. This year's top honor went to New Kid by Jerry Craft, a graphic novel about learning to fit in in middle school.

Edgar Award

Writers of Mystery America is the premier organization for mystery writers, professionals allied to the crime writing field, aspiring crime writers and

those who are devoted to the genre. MWA is dedicated to promoting higher regard for crime writing and recognition and respect for those who write within the genre. Each Spring, Mystery Writers of America present the Edgar[®] Awards, widely acknowledged to be the most prestigious awards in the genre.

National Book Critics Circle Award

Each March, the NBCC presents awards for the finest books and reviews published in English the previous year in six categories: fiction, nonfiction, autobiography, biography, criticism and poetry.

National Book Awards First awarded in 1950, the National Book Awards recognize the best of American literature. The Awards are announced in November.

Women's Prize for Fiction

One of the most prestigious literary awards in the world, it celebrates excellence, originality and accessibility in women's writing from throughout the world. The 2020

awards were its 25th year, and the top prize went to Maggie O'Farrell for Hamnet, a fascinating, fictionalized look into the life of Shakespeare's only son.

Hugo Awards

For the Sci-Fi fans, there are the Hugo Awards. These awards are administered by the World Science Fiction Convention, so you know they know the best of the best. The honor of Best Novel this year went to Arkady Martine's A Memory Called Empire.

PEN/Faulkner The Award

When a writing award shares its name with William Faulkner, you can bet they are choosing a book that shows complete mastery of the craft of writing. The PEN portion of the name is short for Poetry, Editors, and Novelists, a representation of those who give the award. This year's top prize for fiction went to Chloe Aridjis for Sea Monsters, a fantastic, surreal novel about the journey of a teenage girl to find adventure and her father's journey to find her.

The Caldecott Medal

The Caldecott Medal is named in honor of 19th-century illustrator Randolph Caldecott and is award annually by the Children's division of the American Library Association for excellence in illustration of children's literature. Kadir Nelson earned the honor this year for his illustrations of Kwame Alexander's The Undefeated.

Stoker Awards

The Stoker Award is a recognition presented annually by the Horror Writers Association for "superior achievement" in dark fantasy and horror writing. Winner: Goingback, Owl - Coyote Rage.

The Shirley Jackson Awards

Presented for outstanding achievement in horror, psychological suspense and dark fantasy fiction.

Audie Awards

The Audie Awards, sponsored by the Audio Publishers Association (APA), recognizes distinction in audiobooks and spoken word entertainment in 29 categories. The 2020 winner was The Only Plane in the Sky: An Oral History of 9/11 by Garrett M. Graff.

Email letters to the editor to shawn.nowlin@ourvalley.org



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The New Castle Record encourages letters from our readers on topics of general interest to the community and responses to our articles and columns. Letters must be signed and have a telephone

Morgan Griffith Representative

An analogy I like to use for the legislative process invokes candy apples and toads. Legislation rarely includes only things I like the candy apples - or omits the things I really dislike - the toads. Considering whether to support a bill usually means weighing whether there are enough candy apples to cover up the bad taste of a few toads.

End-of-year legislating usually provides plenty of opportunities to apply this test. As the year draws to a close, Congress once again finds itself closing in on a deadline to fund the Fed-

situation. Federal law prescribes a budget process of individual appropriations bills that should go through regular order at the committee and floor level.

Candy Apples and Toads

Just following the rules could help us avoid the scramble to resolve everything with one bill that, even if read, Members of Congress rarely get to fully scrutinize before having to give it an up or down vote.

Because the omnibus bill funding the government for the rest of the fiscal year ending September 30 has not yet been agreed to by negotiators, Congress passed a continuing resolution (CR) continuing current funding for just one week.

Like omnibuses, I generally do not find CRs to be a proper way to fund the government. But as with

er program for two years. This program encourages the development of new drugs to treat rare pediatric diseases. The innovation promoted by this program can lead to new treatments that help improve and save the lives of children suffering from rare diseases.

While skeptical of CRs, I support the extension of the Rare Pediatric Disease Priority Review Vouchers, so I voted for this CR. In the best instances, legislation rarely includes everything I want to see or leaves out anything I do not support.

In this case, extending the program for two years was a candy apple that made voting for the oneweek toad of a CR acceptable.

The Right Way to Legislate on Marijuana

In my last column, I

for businesses and individuals associated with the marijuana industry. It was a sweeping, parti-

san effort that made major changes at a time when the Congress should have other priorities. Despite my support for changes to marijuana law, it was the wrong bill at the wrong time.

The week afterward, the House voted on another bill related to marijuana, my Medical Marijuana Research Act. I believe this was the right approach to marijuana legislation.

The Medical Marijuana Research Act would ensure a sufficient supply of research-quality marijuana through the National Institute on Drug Abuse Drug Supply Program. It also authorizes more research so that we understand more specifically the medical benefits and side effects of marijuana on the human body. It would also direct

number where you can be reached to be considered for publication. All letters will be verified before publication. The Record reserves the right to deny publication of any letter and edit letters for length content and style. News of public interest is solicited from all sections of the county.

eral Government for the fiscal year that began on October 1.

As in previous years, we did not need to be in this

any other bill I vote on, I read this CR.

It included an extension for the Rare Pediatric Disease Priority Review Vouch-

discussed my opposition to H.R. 3884, a broad bill to legalize marijuana, expunge marijuana convictions, and provide taxpayer support

See Griffith, page 5



SCC's Bureau of Insurance advises Virginians regarding insurance coverage for floods

The 2020 hurricane season may be over, but the State Corporation Commission's (SCC) Bureau of Insurance (Bureau) cautions Virginians not to let their guard down when it comes to the threat of floods. Heavy rains, saturated soil, melting snow and ice, broken dams and a lack of vegetation due to wildfires, development or other causes are just a few factors that can contribute to flooding.

The Bureau reminds Virginians that homeowners, renters and commercial insurance policies typically do not cover damage or loss caused by a flood event. "Floods can happen anywhere and anytime," said Virginia Insurance Commissioner Scott A. White. "Even a few inches of water can cause extensive damage to your home and its contents."

White encourages Virginians to assess their flood risk and protect themselves financially before the waters start to rise. If you live in a floodplain near a river, or if you live near the coast, it is especially important to consider purchasing separate flood insurance for your home. However, keep in mind that even low-risk communities can experience flooding.

Although homeowners, renters and commercial insurance policies issued in Virginia typically do not provide coverage for damage to your home, business and belongings caused by floods, the federal government does sell insurance for direct flood and Kathy Treanor SCC Communications Manager Guest Contributor

flood-related damage through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). This federally backed flood insurance is available to homeowners, renters and business owners, and offers separate coverage for structures and contents. "There is usually a 30day waiting period before a new flood insurance policy takes effect, so the time to plan is now," White said.

For more information

about flood insurance, contact your insurance agent or the NFIP at 1-800-427-4661 or FloodSmart@FEMA.DHS. gov or visit floodsmart.gov. Some private insurers also offer their own flood insurance policies, so check with your insurance agent about the availability of a private flood insurance policy. In either case, ask whether your flood policy provides coverage for your personal property.

Virginians also should consider whether their auto insurance covers flood damage to their vehicles. Unlike homeowners insurance, auto insurance generally covers damage caused by flooding. However, the policyholder must have other-than-collision (also known as comprehensive) coverage on their vehicle. This coverage pays for damage to a vehicle from such things as fire, water, hail, vandalism, glass breakage, wind and falling objects.

The SCC's Bureau of Insurance offers consumer guides regarding homeowners and auto insurance and disaster-related property insurance claims. For copies of the guides or other publications offered by the Bureau of Insurance or answers to your insurance questions, contact the Bureau of Insurance Property and Casualty Consumer Services Section at 804-371-9185 in Richmond or toll-free at 1-877-310-6560. Copies of the consumer insurance guides are also available on the Bureau's website at scc.virginia. gov/pages/Insurance.

We've worked hard to achieve a COVID-19 compromise package. We can't afford inaction.

As the country stared into the abyss of a once-in-a-generation health and economic crisis earlier this year, Congress responded by passing five bills totaling approximately \$3 trillion in relief to stave off disaster. Most economists agree that this prompt action kept millions out of poverty and prevented small businesses across the country from shuttering permanently. But nearly nine months since the pandemic began, at least 280,000 Americans have died, funding for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) has run dry, and up to 12 million people could lose jobless benefits by year's end, portending a miserable Christmas season unless Congress once again acts.

Despite a broad consensus that more relief is desperately needed, for months congressional leaders and the White House have been trapped on a merry-go-round of negotiations that have led only to one stalemate after another. Millions of struggling families watched as Washington dysfunction hijacked a debate with their lives and livelihoods at stake. We're proud to work across the aisle to solve the most pressing issues facing our nation, even though it has subjected us both at times to criticism from people in our own parties who would rather smear the other side than get things done. At a moment like this, with millions of Americans getting sick or losing their jobs, we felt the stakes were simply too high to allow partisan warfare to prevent us from delivering relief to the people of Maine, Virginia and all of America.

So, we began quietly reaching out to like-minded colleagues to explore ways to break the partisan logjam among party leaders. Out of the public eye and off TV, we worked for two weeks over Zoom and socially distanced pizza dinners to negotiate a compromise on emergency funding that senators from both parties could find a way to support. The result is a bipartisan \$908 billion relief framework that, if passed, would help Americans at least get through the next four months as vaccine manufacturing and distribution ramp up. The process,



too, can serve as a template for progress on other difficult but vital issues in our closely divided Senate.

The framework includes money for small-business loans and another round of muchneeded PPP funds, targeted to those small businesses that are suffering most due to covid-19, such as restaurants and live entertainment venues. It will provide \$35 billion to help health-care providers struggling under the weight of a record number of cases and hospitalizations, and billions more for testing, contact tracing and vaccine distribution. It also provides billions for rental assistance and unemployment benefits for Americans who have found themselves jobless through no fault of their own,

and it relieves student borrowers by allowing them to continue deferring federal loans.

It includes \$160 billion to keep state and local governments from laying off teachers, first responders and sanitation workers in the middle of the pandemic, as well as funding for broadband, education, nutrition, agriculture, airlines, motor coaches, Amtrak and mass transit. It also invests in the low-income and minority communities that have been hardest hit by covid-19 by setting aside funding for communitybased lenders that have a demonstrated history of getting capital into underserved communities, with the goal of staving off a wave of Black and Latino business closures.

The total package of \$908 billion is much smaller than the \$2.2 trillion sought by Democrats in the House, and much larger than the \$500 billion plan Republicans put on the floor in October. Our package is a common-sense compromise that includes the best ideas from both Republicans and Democrats and focuses on areas where there is consensus.

We fully acknowledge that parts of this agreement — as well as items not included — will be difficult pills for some senators in both parties to swallow. But the cost of inaction is higher if millions of American families are forced into the holiday season wondering whether they will be able to put food on the table or keep a roof over their heads.

At a moment like this — as intensive care units are flooded with desperately sick patients, restaurant workers wonder how they are going to survive the cold weather ahead and parents are forced to send their children to bed hungry — it would be both foolish and heartless not to do something. We believe this compromise is necessary to provide urgently needed relief to the American people ahead of what will be, according to all the experts, a long and difficult winter.

Inaction at this critical juncture would be a self-inflicted wound from which our country would take years to recover.



the Food and Drug Administration to issue guidelines on the production of marijuana and encourage authorized manufacturers to produce marijuana for the

had moved through the House Energy and Commerce Committee without opposition and passed on the House floor in the same manner. Its consideration did not take up valuable legislative time in the same way as H.R. 3884. I was pleased to see the Medical Marijuana Research Act pass the House and hope it will advance into law. It represents the right way to legislate on marijuana - with prudence and based on data. If you have questions, concerns, or comments, feel free to contact my office. You can call my Abingdon office at 276-525-1405 or my Christiansburg office at 540-381-5671. To reach

my office via email, please visit my website at www. morgangriffith.house.gov. Also on my website is the latest material from my office, including information

OBITUARY Moore, Pamela J. Pamela J. Moore, 67, ton and Susie Strong.

of Catawba passed away on Friday, December 4. She was preceded in death by her husband, Charles Edward Moore; nephew, Richard Snider; brother, Robert Patton; and parents, William "Bill" and Alveta Patton.

Surviving are her son, William "Randy" Moore and fiancé, Kristi Nichols; grandson, Logan

Edward Moore; brothers, Nelson (Donna) Snider and Neal Chapman Snider; sister, Anita Diane (Eddie) Crawford; several sister-in-law and brothers-in-law including, Kay Pat-



In lieu of flowers, the family asks that memorials be made to St. Jude Children's Hospital.

Funeral services were conducted at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 9, at Simpson Funeral Home 5160 Peters Creek Road by Pastor Aaron Mansfield.

Interment was private. The family received friends from 2 to 6 p.m. on Tuesday, December 8, at Simpson Funeral Home. Arrangements by Simpson Funeral Home 366-0707. researchers under the law. I was an original co-

sponsor of the bill in this Congress, and along with a bipartisan team we had introduced it in previous years. Unlike H.R. 3884, it had support that spanned parties and also different views about marijuana legislation. Whether you want marijuana broadly prohibited, broadly legalized, or fall somewhere in between, you should want to see more data about its effects.

Because of its widespread support, the bill this year

on votes recently taken on the floor of the House of Representatives.

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BETHEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

11599 Cumberland Gap Road/Rt. 42, New Castle, 864-5242; church phone:544-7040 Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m., Sunday School 10:30 a.m., Choir Tuesday 7:30p.m., Youth Outreach and Missions Program. Rev. Charles Stacy.

CHESTNUT GROVE CHURCH

Duane Wente, Minister, Rt. 42, New Castle, 540-864-5692. Sunday: Worship 10:00 a.m.

CORNERSTONE CHURCH

Pastor Don Brown, Corner of Salem and Wagner, New Castle, 580-3228. Sunday Worship 10:30am (Children meet separately, Nursery provided). Bible Study - Wednesday 6p Teens - Wednesday 6p. Ministries: Men, Ladies, Young Adult, and Seniors. Times vary, call for details.

CRAIG HEALING SPRINGS CHRISTIAN CHURCH

(Disciples of Christ)

Pastor - Kenneth W. Davis, Jr., 6 Grannys Branch Road (Johns Creek), New Castle, Phone: 864-6102. Sunday School at 10 am. Sunday Worship at 11 am every Sunday. Fellowship meal after Sunday Worship on second Sundays. Everyone is welcome!

CRAIG VALLEY BAPTIST

171 Salem Avenue, New Castle, 864-5667; Sunday School 10:00 a.m., Sunday Worship 11:00 a.m., Wednesday: Prayer Service and Bible Study 7:00 p.m., Youth Group 6:30-8:00PM, Bible Buddies at 6:30-8:00PM. Transportation provided - call the church. Hearing devices also available. www.craigvalleybaptist.com

CRAIG VALLEY GOSPEL FELLOWSHIP

HWY 621, Pastor Roy Lee Law Jr., "Jay", 864-8984. Sunday School 10:00am; Worship 11:00am., Wednesday night Bible study 7pm, from HWY 311, up HWY 621, 8 miles on left.

CROSSROADS CHURCH

21892 Craigs Creek Road, New Castle. Pastor Gary Burch. 864-7520. Sunday School- 10-10:45AM, Sunday Worship - 11AM-Noon.

FIRST BAPTIST

Pastor Kevin Altizer, Corner of Main Street & Boyd Ave., New Castle. Church phone 864-5919. Sunday School 10:00AM, Sunday Worship 11:00AM and 6PM. Wednesday Evening Bible Study 7PM, Youth Group 7:00PM, Reformers Unanimous Addiction Recovery every Friday evening at 7PM.

GRACE ASSEMBLY OF GOD

5530 Catawba Valley Drive, Catawba, VA, 540-384-7075. Pastor Loraine Taylor, agladypastor@msn.com. Sunday service begins at 10:30 a.m.; Wednesday Evening service at 7:00 p.m.; Youth (ages 13-18) & Super Church (ages 4-12) Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. You can also watch on Facebook Live at 10:30 a.m. www.graceassemblycatawaba.org

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

159 Old Railroad Ave, New Castle, 540-864-PRAY, Sunday School 9:30AM, Sunday Worship Service 10:00AM, Wednesday Night Services 7:00PM.

HEBRON UNITED METHODIST

Pastor Rodney Longmire, Rt. 606, 1981 Caldwell Mt. Rd., New Castle, 540-400-3419. Worship 11:15AM.

LIGHTHOUSE BAPTIST

Rev. Lee Looney, Rt. 311 N., New Castle. Sunday: Sunday School 10AM, 11AM, & 6PM. Wednesday Bible Study 7PM.

LEVEL GREEN CHRISTIAN CHURCH

3388 Cumberland Gap Rd. Newport, Duane Wente, Minister, 540-544-7179. Sunday School 10:00am, Sunday Morning Worship 11:00am, Children's Church 11:00am. Choir Practice, bi-weekly 7:00pm, Ladies meeting first Monday of each month at 7:00pm.

LIGHTHOUSE BAPTIST

Pastor Lee Looney, Rt. 311 N., New Castle, 540-525-7662. Sunday: Sunday School 10AM, 11AM, & 6PM. Wednesday Bible Study 7PM.

MOUNTAIN VIEW CHRISTIAN

4199 Craig Valley Drive, New Castle, 864-6622. Sunday: Worship Service 9:00 a.m., Children's Church 9:15 a.m., Sunday School 10:30 a.m.

NEW CASTLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH "WHERE YOUR HEART CAN FEEL THE DIFFERENCE"

Sheldon Cosma, Senior Minister; Alex James, Youth Minister; 282 Salem Ave., New Castle; 864-5212; Sunday Mornings: 9 A.M. Contemporary Service and 10:45 A.M. Traditional Service with Sunday School at 10 A.M.; Sunday night adult Bible study at 7 P.M.; Sunday Night Youth Bible study (6-12) at 6:30 P.M.; Wednesday night Bible study at 5:30 P.M. for K-5; If you need a ride to church, please contact Calvin Duncan by 8 P.M. on Saturday at 864-5321; www.nc-cc.org.

NEW CANTERBURY PENTECOSTAL FELLOWSHIP

Pastor John D. Abbott, Hwy 621 (10 miles), phone: 864-8242, Sunday Morning Lesson 9:45 a.m.; Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m.; Wednesday Night Service 6:00 pm.

PAXTON CHAPEL

Pastor Kenny Davis, 17 Sage Brush Lane, New Castle; "Presenting God's Word Faithfully"; Sunday School 10:00 AM; Sunday Worship Service 11:15 AM; visit us on the web at www.paxtonchapelchurch. com; email at paxtonchapel@ yahoo.com.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Contact person: Panco Cantley, 864-5035, 118 Main Street, New Castle. Service Times: Sunday, Bible classes-10 a.m., Worship-11:00 a.m., Evening Worship-6 p.m.; Wednesday, Bible classes - 7 p.m.

NEW CASTLE UNITED METHODIST

Rev. Charles Stacy, 364 Main St., New Castle, Va. 864-5242; Sunday School 10AM, Worship 11AM; Monday Adult Choir 7PM, UMW 3rd Wednesday 7PM, Youth and other programs, Bible Studies.

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST CATHOLIC CHURCH

99 2nd Street, New Castle. Rev. Stephen McNally. 540-473-3691. Mass is on Sunday at 11:15 AM.

CRAIG COUNTY COMMUNITY CHURCH -'WELCOME HOME!'

Sunday service 9-10:15am at the VFW building in New Castle. Casual dress if you desire and contemporary praise and worship. If you don't have a 'home' church, please join us at ours with Pastor Gary Burch. Check us out on facebook or contact us at: craigcountycommunity-church@gmail.com.

ST. THOMAS ANGLICAN CHURCH

Located at 4910 Hubert Rd, NW Roanoke, Va. Traditional Liturgical Lenten Services, Sunday at 10:30 am. Call (540) 589-1299 or visit www.sttofc.org for midweek masses and events. (In Roanoke, go E on Hershberger, L on Hubert to 4910).

If your church is not listed and if you are interested, call Randy Thompson at 540-389-9355 or email at advertise@mainstreetnewspapers.com



The Craig County Sheriff's Office is seeking applications for the position of Part-Time Dispatcher. Applicants must be 21 years of age and possess a high school diploma or GED equivalent

and available to work all shifts to including nights, weekends and holidays on a as needed basis. Successful applicants will be required to undergo comprehensive training and be required to complete basic dispatch school and basic VCIN training as a condition of continued employment. A criminal background check is required. Commonwealth of Virginia Application for Employment can be obtained at the Craig County Sheriff's Office or on the Craig County Government website http://craigcountyva.gov/ employment opportunities/ Deadline for applications is January 4th, 2021 at 5:00 pm.



BOWLING, DAVID H.

The object of this suit is to: LOCATE PARENTS.

It is ORDERED that DAVID H. BOWLING appear at the above-named Court and protect his or her interests on or before 1/19/2021 2:00pm.

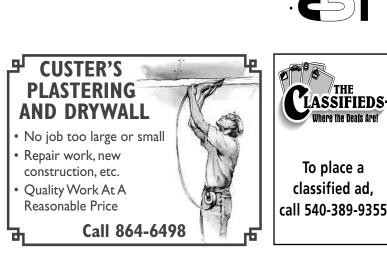
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Hokies regain Commonwealth Cup



The Commonwealth Cup is back in Blacksburg after a one year hiatus as Virginia Tech beat the University of Virginia in football last Saturday night, 33-15. The Hokies had won the cup for 15 straight years before Virginia's win in Charlottesville in 2019. Here Hokies celebrate following the win as captain Jarrod Hewitt(#5) holds the cup high, then gather around coach Justin Fuente. Tech, now 5-6, hopes to secure a bowl berth this week while UVA has announced it will not accept a bid if it's offered due to the coronavirus pandemic.

High School basketball season unlikely to begin next week, VHSL will not require masks to be worn in games and practices

The high school basketball season is scheduled to begin next week, but as opening day nears it appears unlikely teams will able to play due to the coronavirus pandemic. Under current rules for practice teams are still social distancing and not allowed to share basketballs. That would make it impossible to play games. Also, the Virginia High School League has clarified a previous announcement about wearing face coverings. On December 10, the VHSL announced that it "is requiring each school to follow the recommendations of the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)" that students and coaches wear masks while participating in sports.

This requirement was issued in response to information that the Governor's Requirement to Wear Face Coverings would include such a provision. However, EO 72 when issued stated that Face Coverings requirements "do not apply to ... individuals exercising or using exercise equipment."

"VHSL apologizes for any confusion created by its original release," said VHSL Executive Director, Dr. John W. "Billy" Haun. "We ask the public to understand that it is the first mission of VHSL to make sure that athletics are conducted in a safe and healthy environment, and it was that desire that motivated the original decision."

Accordingly, VHSL is rescinding its "requirement" that face coverings be worn during training and competition and is reissuing its guidance to conform with the intent of EO 72 that face masks are "strongly encouraged" but not required. Each school may continue to exercise its discretion and judgment as to safety steps within its athletics programs as it pertains to face coverings.

Salem Red Sox survive minor league baseball cutdown

In conjunction with Major League Baseball's new Minor League player development structure, the Boston Red Sox invited the following clubs for continued professional affiliation last week: the Worcester Red Sox (AAA), Portland Sea Dogs (AA), Greenville Drive (A Advanced) and Salem Red Sox (A).

"We are pleased that Worcester, Portland, Greenville, and Salem have been invited to continue their affiliation and will remain part of the extended Red Sox family," said Red Sox President & CEO Sam Kennedy. "Our farm system is an essential component in our work to create a more consistent and efficient operation that helps us play October baseball each and every year. We thank our affiliates for the significant role they play in shaping our future stars, and look forward to continuing our relationship under MLB's improved player development structure."

While Salem has been moved from the Advanced Class A level to Class A, the city is happy to continue to provide Minor League Baseball to the Roanoke Valley community. more than decade-long partnership with the City of Salem, the entire Roanoke valley community, and the loyal employees of the Salem Sox continues. In this most difficult of times, it's a sign of continuity and hope, welcomed by all."

The lost team at Lowell was eliminated and the Pawtucket team, a Boston affiliate since 1973, was moved to Worcester.

"We are very pleased to be invited to enter into a long-term agreement with the Boston Red take the field and bring us joy."

Portland will remain the Sox Class AA team and Greenville will now move from Class A to the Advanced Class A level.

"We thank the Red Sox for continuing to place their trust in us and going forward, to giving our amazing fans more opportunities to see future big-league stars in action, right here in Portland," said Portland Sea Dogs President & General Manager Geoff Iacuessa. "We appreciate the Red Sox commitment strong partnerships," said Greenville Drive Owner & President Craig Brown. "Our most important partnership has been with the Boston Red Sox. We have had the privilege of being part of Major League Baseball's most storied organization for close to two decades, with our fans witnessing more than 90 players realizing their dreams by making it to the big leagues and playing for World Championships. We eagerly anticipate the return of baseball to Fluor Field this spring

"We are delighted by our continued affiliation with the Boston Red Sox, one of MLB's premiere organizations," said Salem Red Sox Managing Director Jeff White. "A Sox," said Dr. Charles Steinberg, President of the Worcester Red Sox. "In this, the deep depths of December, we all long to see the next generation of Red Sox stars to the Sea Dogs, the city of Portland, and the state of Maine."

"Since the inaugural season of the Greenville Drive in 2006 our success has been built upon and welcoming the next group of Red Sox stars while we continue to build upon our unique partnership with the Boston Red Sox for years to come."

Salem Red Sox Present Holiday Film Favorite Saturday

The Salem Red Sox will have their final "holiday film favorites" this Saturday night at Salem Memorial Stadium. The Sox will offer National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation, presented by Virginia Birth Father Registry, on the right field fan vision. Gates open at 4 pm and the movie will begin at 6 pm. While admission is free, the Salem Red Sox will be collecting food donations at each event for Feeding America Southwest Virginia. Due to the current capacity restrictions, seating will be limited to 250. The Salem Red Sox are currently accepting reservations for suites starting at just \$75. Suites feature waitress service, indoor & outdoor seating, and will guarantee admission for up to 10 guests. Suite availability is very limited. "The Salem Red Sox are excited to welcome guests to the ballpark as we celebrate this holiday season in a safe, family-friendly environment," said General Manager, Allen Lawrence. "We hope families will be able to join us to take their

minds off this challenging year and make everlasting memories with loved ones."

The Salem Red Sox will be following all statewide safety measures, distancing guidelines and CDC recommendations. Masks are highly encouraged.

Punching for suckers



Today is day 277 AG, or eight and a half months "After Gobert" came down with the virus and the Utah Jazz walked off the court. Since then sports events have become a week to week adventure with few or no fans in the seats and many things being called off.

It's been better lately, at least for fans, with some decent stuff to watch on TV. Remember how it was back in midsummer, when Korean baseball was a highlight of the week and most of the sports we watched were replays of games from years gone by? Well, the recent fight between Mike Tyson and Roy Jones, Jr. was something that would have been a big event in June, but not now.

Tyson, 54, and Jones, 51 fought to a draw over eight two-

minute rounds in Los Angeles on November 28. I discovered this "event" was going to happen the day prior and thought it might be interesting to tune in. So, I checked to see what channel it would be on and found it to be on "FITE TV" and "Triller."

I get hundreds and hundreds of channels on my TV but I never even heard of those two. I get a dozen or so Spanish speaking channels and international soccer games and the golf channel. I watch old Jack Benny and Groucho Marx shows on the Jewish station and every gangster or Nazi known to exist is on some channel or another late at night. But the "Triller" channel? Is that 24 hours of Michael Jackson dancing or what?

I found the easiest way to get the fight was on pay per view, and you could buy it for "only" \$49.99. If you think 50 bucks is a little steep to see two guys box whose combined ages are 105, join the club. I wonder if anyone actually signed up for it? Not me.

As most of you realize, Tyson

is one bizarre character. Anyone who gets tattoos on their face is either a couple bricks shy of a load or planning to be in prison for a good number of years. From what I understand if you're in prison and you look really crazy they'll leave you alone. Never been there so I can't say for sure.

Tyson was at one time the heavyweight champ and a feared opponent, but that was many years ago. His explanation for his return to the ring is as strange as the man himself. He claims "Toad Venom" made him do it.

"I took the medicine, and the medicine told me to get into shape," he said, via USA Today. "It really blew my mind. It told me to come back and start getting in shape."

Now I went to college in the'70s and I did some things I'd just as soon not reveal in my column, but "Toad Venom" was never an option in my social life. I never heard of it, or knew toads had venom to begin with. After some research I found the following on the internet.

"The Addiction Center re-

leased a report in October 2019 calling toad venom a 'trendy new psychedelic' and comparing it to mescaline. The drug comes from a toad native to the Sonoran Desert that produces venom known as 5-MeO-DMT. It's reportedly about six times more powerful than the hallucinogenic DMT, or n n-dimethyltryptamine."

If you can understand that you did better in chemistry than I did, and that's not a misprint, the two n's are like that. Sounds to me like it's something you might take before a Pink Floyd concert. I would think its likely illegal, but so strange there might not be a law to cover it. Can you see a security guard stopping you at the door and asking, "hey buddy, what's that croaking under your sweatshirt?"

The internet study I found went on to report. . . . "It's such an intense experience that, in most cases, doing it at a party isn't safe. It's not a recreational drug. If people get dosed too high, they can 'white out' and disassociate from their mind and body," Alan K. Davis, a clinical psychologist and assistant professor at Johns Hopkins University's psychedelic research unit, said in the report.

I knew some folks who would

pay good money to feel like that, borrowing a line from Christopher's Lloyd's "Reverend Jim" character in the classic TV sitcom "Taxi." Most of them never graduated but they were a lot of fun to be around until they flunked out.

I wonder if they checked the fighters for toad venom prior to Saturday night's "big bout?" From what I read Tyson won the early rounds before Jones came on in the last few to earn the draw. Tyson hasn't ruled out fighting again, but only exhibitions and not as a professional. I guess it depends on how many toads they can find in the desert.

Also on the card was a bout between someone named Jake Paul and former NBA basketball player Nate Robinson, who was known for his thrilling dunks despite being one of the shortest players in the league. Paul knocked Robinson out with a "brutal right hook" in the second round, leaving the former baller unconscious. I guess playing for the Knicks doesn't seem so bad after that.

And that's the way things are in 2020. Maybe instead of stimulus checks they ought to send everyone a little toad venom to help get us through the year.

Croak, croak!!